CHOLESTEROL AND PHOSPHOLIPID PATTERNS OF THE ERYTHROCYTE MEMBRANE: A POTENTIAL “MIRROR” OR A “TROYAN HORSE” ACTING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF METABOLIC DISEASE

Perturbation in carbohydrate and lipid metabolism and transport is an integral part of the pathophysiology of a plethora of diseases.

In this presentation, a novel role of the erythrocyte membrane is postulated, as part of the general processes of lipid and cholesterol exchange between plasma and tissues, featuring the paradigm of Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), where the erythrocyte membrane of patients with acute coronary disease (ACS) were observed to bear a higher cholesterol load versus those of patients with chronic stable angina (CSA) [1] and the quantity of cholesterol in those patients was shown to determine plaque progression [2], linking closely with coronary atherosclerotic burden [3] and suggesting a potential interplay between erythrocyte-derived lipid and the expansion of atheroma. This particular cholesterol pool responds to statin administration, displaying different time-course kinetics regarding either ACS or CSA [4].

An animal model aiding proof of principle [5] is also outlined.

Under this perspective, the erythrocyte emerges both as a collateral lipid transporter that can determine the risk of an acute incident, and as a true reporter/biomarker of the state of affairs at tissue level acting as a “Troyan horse” and a “mirror” of CAD.

Finally, a potential involvement of the erythrocyte membrane in other paradigms of diseases manifesting perturbations in lipid metabolism (Hepatitis C, Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis) is outlined, as spin-off projects that are active at present.

References


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List of publications


